



## REJOINDER

TO THE

REPLY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

OF THE

Republican Party of So. Carolina

TO THE

MEMORIAL

OF THE

TAXPAYERS' CONVENTION.

Charleston, S. C. The News and Courier Job Presses. 1874.







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### REJOINDER.

The Reply of the State Central Committee of the Republican Party to the Memorial of the Taxpayers' Convention is before us. As the members of the State Committee are, also, members of the Legislature, or officeholders under the State Government, they are more or less involved in the issues made by the Memorial.

The Reply begins with the charge that the Memorialists declined to accept the earnest invitation of Republicans to participate in the work of Reconstructing the State. This charge is nothing less than an appeal to political prejudice, and is meant to operate as a diversion from the present issues. Even if true, in its full extent, it would not, and could not, justify spoliation and plunder under the forms of law. It is, however, proper to say that the leading men of the State were put under political disabilities by the Reconstruction Acts; and that no such invitation as that described was extended to them. On the contrary, distrust was, from the very beginning, sown broadcast in the minds of the newly enfranchised citizens, against the former rulers, by designing men, who, taking advantage of their inexperience, played upon their passions for the selfish purpose of enriching themselves and promoting their own political advancement. And it is these very men, and their associates, who, banded together by the cohesive power of public plunder, have first destroyed the credit of the State, by an excessive issue of bonds, and are now engaged in crushing out the people of the State by the wanton abuse of the power of taxation.

When the Memorial of the Taxpayers to Congress was published, the passages which had the most effect upon the popular mind, were those which illustrate the difference between the ex-

penses of the State Government before the war, and the expenses since Reconstruction. The Central Committee felt that it was imperatively necessary to lessen, if they could, the force of the facts contained in the Memorial, and in their Apology, or Counterstatement, they accordingly say:

The statement that "the annual expenses of the Government have advanced from \$400,000 before the war to two millions and a half at the present time," is entirely incorrect, and the items of expenditures given to prove this statement are wholly inaccurate and untrue, and skilfully selected to deceive.

This is a serious charge, and it shall be squarely met. It divides itself into two branches, viz: the denial that the annual expenses of the Government were \$400,000 before the war, and the denial that the annual expenses of the Government are two millions and a half at the present time. In speaking of annual expenses, the Memorialists took into account only the ordinary expenses of the Government. They would not, for example, charge, as part of the expenses of the Government, an extraordinary expenditure met by the issue of bonds, or by means other than taxation. This, also, is the view taken by the Central Committee. Were they to include the increase of the State debt, since Reconstruction, in their estimate of the expenses of the Government, they would (see Treasurer Cardozo's article in the Columbia Union, of February 23, 1874,) swell the cost of their rule, for four years and five months, ending on November 30, 1872, to "an average annual expenditure of \$4,557,066." This is far worse than the average of \$1,863,150, for State purposes alone, which, in the same article, Treasurer Cardozo confesses. We have to deal then only with ordinary receipts and ordinary expenses. The Committee, however, to give some color of truth to their arraignment of the Memorial, and "to show the unjust and adroit manner in which the statement of expenditures has been manipulated by the Memorialists, for their purposes of deception," submit a statement, "carefully compiled from the official records, of the expenses of the State Government before the war and the first three years after." With "the first three years after" we have at present nothing to do. The figures for the nine years ending in 1860 are given, by the Committee, as follows:

1851-52	\$ 463,021 73
1852-53	482,974 67
1853-54	
1854-55	
1855-56	
1856-57	608,294 85
1857–58	
1858-59	,
1859-60	967,968 57
Nine years	\$6,077,034 70
Annual average	\$ 675,226 07

This appears to be, at the first glance, a plausible reply to the statement of the Memorialists, but unfortunately for the Committee, who say that "these figures do not include interest on the public debt," the figures in question do include considerable sums for both interest and capital of the public debt, and, also, for extraordinary expenses which were provided for otherwise than by taxation. The amounts actually received by the Comptroller for State taxes in the nine years before named were as follows:

1851–52\$	331,341 00
1852-53	341,853 25
1853-54	422,742 69
1854-55	377,501 90
1855-56	501,771 87
1856-57	434,167 29
1857–58	439,137 29
1858–59	600,444 29
1859-60	591,799 58
Nine years\$4	,040,759 16

....\$ 448,973 24

Annual average.....

This is very different from the annual average as shown in the figures of the Committee. The plain truth is that there were, in every year of the nine years, extraordinary expenses, which form no part of the ordinary expenses of the Government. The principal of these were the expenditures for the Defence of the State, and the expenditures for the New State House, and for interest on the bonds and stocks issued on account of that edifice. A large sum of money was spent in improving Charleston Harbor, and there were other extraordinary expenses, of which we take no account.

1. The expenditures for the Defence of the State, which were met almost entirely by the surplus profits of the Bank of the State, were as follows:

1851-52\$130,000	00
1852–53	00
1853-54 80,273	52
Total\$247,583	52

2. The Expenditures for the New State House, and for interest on the New State House bonds and stocks, the expenditures being met by the sale of bonds and stocks, were as follows:

1854-55,	New	State	Hou	se	 		\$	83,115	75
1855-56,	66	66	66		 			71,514	48
1856-57,	"	44	"		 			140,401	96
1857-58,	44	"	46		 			522,604	12
1858-59,	66	"	66		 			355,000	00
1859-60,	"	44	66		 			418,717	48
							_		
$T\epsilon$	otal				 		\$	1,591,353	79
							_		
1854-55,	Inter	est			 		\$	13,080	00
1854–55, 1855–56,	Inter							13,080 12,690	
,					 	<i>:</i>		•	00
1855-56,	"				  	<i>.</i>	• • • •	12,690	00
1855-56, 1856-57,	66		• • • •		  	····		12,690 25,296	00 00 77
1855–56, 1856–57, 1857–58,	66			• • • • •	 			12,690 25,296 42,147	00 00 77 90
1855-56, 1856-57, 1857-58, 1858-59, 1859-60,	" " "			• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	 		• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	12,690 25,296 42,147 69,099	00 00 77 90 60

These amounts added together are:

Defense of the State	
Interest	
Grand total	\$2,093,843 58
Expenses nine years, per Reply	
Actual expenses	\$3,983,191 12
True annual average	
This is an ample vindication of the correctness of given in the Memorial, but we go further and appearance.	_
the amounts raised by State taxation for the ten ye 1858. The figures are taken from the Report o Pickens, dated October 1, 1859:	ears ending in
1858. The figures are taken from the Report o Pickens, dated October 1, 1859:	ears ending in f Comptroller\$ 299,148
1858. The figures are taken from the Report o Pickens, dated October 1, 1859:  1849	ears ending in f Comptroller\$ 299,148 329,991
1858. The figures are taken from the Report o Pickens, dated October 1, 1859:	ears ending in f Comptroller\$ 299,148 329,991 516,175
1858. The figures are taken from the Report o Pickens, dated October 1, 1859:  1849.  1850.  1851.	ears ending in f Comptroller \$ 299,148 329,991 516,175 349,929 362,223

Total for ten	years	. \$4,	,318,987
Annual average		.\$	431,898

533,140 463,246 635,421

It is proved, therefore, that the annual expenses of the State Government before the war were \$400,000. And the average annual outlay of \$431,898, above given, includes, moreover, the payments for fees of jurors and witnesses, for physicians and surgeons, testifying as experts, and for holding post-mortem examinations; also, the cost of dieting prisoners, and the fees of sheriffs, clerks of court, coroners, constables, and the like. These expenses before the war were paid by the State out of the general tax, but are now paid directly by the respective Counties, out of the County tax. In the year 1859-60, these expenditures amounted to \$116,832, and such payments must be deducted from the nominal expenditures of the State Government before the war, in order to make any comparison with the expenditures of the State Government subsequent to the war intelligible and just. Without going into further details, it may safely be asserted that the deductions mentioned would reduce the annual expenditures for State purposes, met by taxation, during the nine years ending in 1858, to an average of less than \$350,000. It now remains to show that the annual expenses of the Government have advanced to two and a half millions of dollars. This is quickly done.

Before the war, the only taxes corresponding to what are known as County taxes were what were known as the police assessments, which, upon an average of nine years preceding the war, amounted to \$140,000 a year. Add this to the general State tax of say \$350,000 a year, and we have a total tax of \$490,000 a year, as the cost to the people, before the war, of conducting the Government of the State. The Comptroller's reports show what the actual expenditures have been in each year, under the rule of the Ring, viz:

1868-69	. \$2,099,365
1869-70	. 1,806,540
1870-71	. 1,853,976
1871–72	. 1,634,835
1872-73	. 1.717.318

This is exclusive of the County tax, which, up to 1872-73, averaged \$450,000 a year, and which, for the year 1873-74, will amount to nearly three-quarters of a million. Add these taxes for County purposes, and the poll tax, to the amounts paid out for State purposes, and it will be seen that the annual expenses of the Government have, as stated in the Memorial, advanced from \$400,000 to even more than two and a half million dollars.

Inasmuch as the expenditures for nine years, ending in 1859, have been proved, it is hardly necessary to discuss the proposition of the Central Committee that the appropriations and expenditures in 1865-66 are no criterion whatever of the regular expenses before the war. But in that year, when the whole machinery of the State Government was in full operation, the expenditures were only \$260,248, and the late Governor Orr, whose broad views the Central Committee dare not question, and whose experience in public affairs none can doubt, officially informed the General Assembly that the Government of the State could be efficiently carried on for \$350,000 a year. But in order that the comparative burden of taxation, under the two rules, may be properly appreciated, it must be borne in mind that the expenditure of \$400,000 a year before the war was raised out of taxable values of about \$500,000,000, while the present expenditure of \$2,500,000 is raised out of taxable values not exceeding \$160,-000,000. This element of calculation, which more than trebles the weight of taxation, is left entirely out of view by the apologists of the present misrule. They do not seem to realize the truth that the poorer people become, the less able they are to bear taxation. On the contrary, their rule appears to be that, from those who have little, shall be taken even the little that they have.

The proposition that the free population of the State has doubled since emancipation, and that, therefore, the "cost of governing" should be increased in the same proportion, is almost too preposterous for argument with those who know the facts. The number of souls in the State before the war was 700,000, and the number is about the same now. It is freely admitted that the number of officers and the amount of salaries, and the appropriations for schools would be increased by the enfranchisement of the freedmen. But that all the expenses of Government would be increased and magnified as if so many additional persons or souls had been introduced into the State, is a device and suggestion worthy of the financial ingenuity which has already impoverished our people by enriching their oppressors. This per capita calculation, in a case such as ours, would excite mirth were the subject not too sad for a joke.

Of similar character is the allegation that the people of the State would allow their lands to be forfeited to the State for nonpayment of taxes "rather than sell them to the colored people," It is a fact that 268,523 acres of land and 309 buildings were forfeited to the State in 1873, for failure to pay State and County taxes for the year 1872, which taxes, with the penalties and costs, amounted to \$32,858, or less than thirteen cents an acre, without counting the buildings. This simple truth staggered the Central Committee, and had to be met in some way. No intelligent man, however, will believe that the landowners are as foolhardy and infatuated as the Central Committee represent them to be. The truth is, the people had not the money to pay, and could not procure it. Nor could the colored population become purchasers, because excessive taxation falls directly or indirectly upon all classes of citizens in the State. We commend to the Central Committee the words of one of their own organs, the Union-Herald, of Columbia, which words are as true as they are pointed:

It is a mistake, as a principle, to assert that when the taxes are so heavy as to compel the owners of land to sell, the poorer class can buy. The middle class may buy, but real poor men can't. When taxes are high, rent and provisions are high, and yet wages are low. It hits the poor man both ways. Every poor man should keep this in mind. That is the reason why, although about 250,000 acres of land have been sold for taxes lately, still the State has had to take it all, and the poor man has not been able to buy a tax title. There is no getting round that fact.

The State Committee take great credit to themselves for the Repudiation of six millions of Conversion Bonds. And yet it is admitted that the money arising from the hypothecation and sale of these very bonds went into the Treasury, and was used by their party. The Legislature "validated" these very bonds, and legalized the acts of the officers in disposing of them; while another Legislature, of the same stamp, has declared them void, on the ground that they were illegally and fraudulently issued. What a precious specimen is this of Ring legislation in South Carolina! But was there no show of a purpose to hold to account the officials who were declared by the General Assembly to

have been guilty of a violation of the law? There was! As soon as the person who was State Treasurer during the administration of Governor Scott ventured to print, in a New York newspaper, a defense of himself and a declaration of the validity of the bonds which had just been repudiated, the General Assembly adopted a Joint Resolution requiring the Attorney-General to prosecute the accused official. This Joint Resolution, however, was conveniently lost at the close of the Session, and the Governor, to whom a duplicate copy was sent, regularly signed by the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House, refused to sign the Joint Resolution upon the ground that it was not received while the Legislature was in Session. Comment is unnecessary.

The statement of the receipts and expenditures at the State Treasuries from October 1, 1859, to September 30, 1860, as published officially in one of their own organs, is in itself sufficient evidence of the disingenuousness of the reply of the Central Committee to the Memorial of the Taxpayers. For instance, that statement shows that, in the year named, the payments for legislative purposes and Public Printing were as follows:

Legislative Expenses.	 	\$16,828 70
Public Printing	 	11,177 78
Total	 	\$28,006 48

But in the three years ending respectively in October, 1871, 1872, and 1873, the amount of money actually paid out for Legislative expenses and Printing was as follows:

	Legislative.	Printing.
1871	\$ 280,361	\$ 133,651
1872	712,249	214,629
1873	291,339	331,945
	\$1,283,949	\$ 680,225 1,283,949
Total for three years	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	
Annual average		\$ 654,724

This shows that the average annual expenditures for Printing and for Legislative expenses, from 1871 to 1873, and for the year 1859-60 were, respectively, \$654,724 and \$28,006. In other words, our new rulers, for the two purposes named, spent twenty-three times as much as was spent, for the same purposes, in that year before the war, which they themselves have chosen as an example of heavy expenditures under Conservative rule.

The Central Committee admit that under Republican rule the debt of the State has been increased from \$5,000,000 to \$16,-000,000, of which amount the present Legislature, as already noticed, has repudiated \$6,000,000, as having been issued without authority of law. This, according to the Committee, "leaves the unquestionably valid debt at \$10,000,000." Of this amount, "\$5,000,000 were issued by the Democrats, and \$5,000,000 by the Republicans"; but "of the amount issued by the Republicans," say the Committee, "they are only really responsible for \$1,700,000, issued for the Relief of the Treasury and the Land Commission." The \$3,300,000, for which they hold that they are not responsible, were issued, they say, to pay past due interest, also, to redeem bills of the Bank of the State, used before the war; also, to redeem the Bills Receivable issued under the administration of Governor Orr. The disingenuousness of this explanation is shown by the records. When Governor Scott succeeded Governor Orr, he reported to the General Assembly that the amount of interest on the public debt due and falling due up to July 1, 1868 (when Reconstruction was absolutely complete) was \$355,204. The holders of the bonds and stocks of the State were perfectly willing to fund their interest. stead of doing this, the Scott administration sold new bonds, at low figures, to meet the overdue interest, in order that a profitable speculation in Wall street might thereby be made. The result is, that the bond debt of the State was increased some \$800,000 to discharge a liability of less than half that amount. In like manner with the Bills Receivable. These were a loan without interest, and, as they were receivable for taxes, could soon have been absorbed. There was no need to force a liquidation of them, but the Scott administration immediately authorized the issue of bonds to redeem these bills, and the consequence is that

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the State stands charged to-day with an interest-bearing bonded debt of \$500,000, incurred in redeeming a debt of \$298,784, which was not pressing for payment, and which bore no interest. case of the bills of the Bank of the State is a similar one. They could have been taken up and cancelled at forty or fifty cents on the dollar, which was far more than they would bring at that time in the market; but the bulk of them were held by a ring of speculators, and the Legislature, regardless of the public interest, funded the bills in bonds of the State at par. Grouping the different sums of floating debt, it is seen that the floating debt, for which the Republicans incurred a bonded debt of \$1,700,000, represented a true value of about half that amount. The difference between what was paid and what ought to have been paid, is chargeable to the maladministration and corruption of the persons whom the Central Committee represent. For the Land Commission, bonds to the amount of \$700,000 were issued by the Republican administration, "to purchase," as the Committee say, "land for sale in small farms to the freedmen;" which "beneficent object has accomplished much good." It has put money in the pockets of various officials, we admit; but we deny that it has been of any advantage to the poor freedman. In 1871, the Legislature appointed a Joint Committee, who, among other things, investigated the affairs of the Land Commission. Senator Swails, who is one of the Central Committee, was a member of the Joint Committee. That committee denounced "the Land Commission and its operations" as "an outrageous and enormous swindle." They declared that there was "little to encourage the belief that the State had valid titles to one half the land purchased by the Land Commission," and that the "whole spirit, letter, and body of the laws" in regard to it had been "disregarded or wantonly perverted." The Central Committee have assuredly very little cause to congratulate themselves upon the "beneficient" results of this pet project of their party.

The Central Committee further say, that they are not ashamed of the fact that the appropriation for schools in 1872-73 is four times greater than in 1859-60. That is an evasion of the question. The taxpayers approve of liberal appropriations for the furtherance of the cause of popular education, but they demand

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that the money, when appropriated, shall be well and honestly applied. The tax for the support of the schools has been regularly levied and collected, and yet the State Superintendent of Education has recently reported to the General Assembly that the outstanding and unpaid school claims amount to \$306,256. The same officer admits that the non-payment of the claims has "most seriously marred the success and usefulness of our free school system," and he says that the "incompetency" of many of the teachers furnishes no reason why their claims should not be paid. A similar wail comes from the administration organ, which says: "Inefficient officers are primarily responsible for the present state of our schools, and unless some steps are taken to elect good men to the position of school commissioners, the General Assembly might as well cut off the school appropriation at once. Our schools need renovating, and this can only be done by securing the services not only of good teachers, but good school officers also." There is, therefore, good Republican authority for saying that hundreds of thousands of dollars intended for school purposes have been squandered or stolen, and that what has been laid out has done very little for the advancement of education. The Committee also take credit for the "liberal appropriations" made for the "unfortunate patients" in the Lunatic Asylum, which Asylum, however, is head over ears in debt, and has reduced to the brink of ruin the charitable merchants who stepped forward to save the lunatics from starvation or the streets, and who are now unable to obtain payment of their just claims against the State.

With their usual recklessness the Central Committee say that the Conservative members of the State Legislature held a caucus, and "unanimously resolved not to participate in the proceedings" of the Taxpayers Convention, which they deemed to be "unwise and injudicious." So soon as this statement appeared in print, the Democratic members in question published a card, in which they declared the statement of the Committee to be false, that it misrepresented their sentiments and actions, that they adopted no resolution not to participate in the proceedings, and that several of them, who were members, did participate in the proceedings.

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The Central Committee say that the allegation of the Memorial that the appropriations made in one year for the public printing amounted to \$475,000, exclusive of \$100,000 for publishing the laws, "is wholly incorrect." For the statement of the Memorial there is, nevertheless, sound Republican authority. The committee appointed by the Legislature in January last to investigate the charges against the Republican Printing Company, say, in their published report, that the "aggregate of appropriations to the Republican Printing Company, during the last twelve months, amounts to \$475,000; the Legislature has also appropriated, during the same period, \$100,000 for publishing the laws." But the Committee urge that the work for which the enormous appropriations were made was extraordinary, and will not occur again for twenty years. The shortest answer to this is a statement of the money paid out for public printing during five years of Republican rule, ending in October, 1873, as follows:

1868-69	\$ 12	000
1869-70	. 22	316
1870-71	. 133	651
1871–72	214	629
1872-73	. 331	945
	\$714	541
Due and unpaid Oct. 31, 1873	. 118	055
Total, five years	.\$832	596
Annual average	.\$166	,519

This latter shows the steady increase in the amount of money paid out for printing, and exposes the flimsy subterfuge of the Committee.

It seems to be admitted by the Central Committee that gross corruptions exist in the Legislative and other departments; but it is regarded as a sufficient justification that, without bribers, there could be no bribery. Let it not be forgotten that those who occupy positions of authority exercise a trust, and are responsible for its honest and faithful exercise. We are no apologists for those

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who bribe, but we do say and insist that public officials, who yield to bribery and become corrupt, are unworthy of the functions with which they are charged—betray the trusts reposed in them, and cannot shelter themselves under the plea that they were tempted. They are put in office to resist temptation; and if, when tried in the balance, they are found wanting, they should read the handwriting on the wall, and hide their miscreated fronts in confusion and shame. To attempt to justify it, is only to magnify the wrong and the wickedness.

That the South Carolina Government is the worst in the world has passed into a by-word. It is needless to multiply proofs. The country knows that this is no false or senseless clamor. honest men of all parties are seeking to rid themselves of the stigma and the incumbrance. Even the leaders of the dominant party in this State admit the existence of the evils of which we complain, and condemn them in more bitter phrase than we have used. During the session of the Taxpayers' Convention, Congressman Elliott, in a speech delivered on the occasion of a public reception given to him in Columbia, said: "I confess, with sadness greater than I can express, that here, in South Carolina, we to-day present a spectacle which does not excite interest in our cause; a spectacle which disheartens our friends, paralyzes our best efforts for the complete civil protection of our people, and makes the name of the State a by-word and reproach to our It is not the Democracy that race. will overthrow us; it is our own party, with its faithless leaders and their infatuated henchmen. Let us not look abroad for our They are here; members of our own party, officers \* elected by our own votes. I appeal to my fellow Republicans, of every race and nationality, to arise in their strength and shake off the terrible incubus, that weighs down our party, to strangle the poisonous viper that is sucking our life blood, to remove the corroding leprosy that is gnawing at the vitals of our body politic." Similar utterances have been made by other prominent officials. A happy day will it be for Carolina when the wicked men who are preying upon her life, and gorging themselves upon her substance, shall be driven into obscurity; and when a just, honest, and benignant Government shall again dispense its care and its blessings over her people.



